

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Digital Repository

Volume 4 | Issue 2

Article 2

1942

National Defense

R. R. Dykstra
Kansas State College

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian



Part of the [Veterinary Medicine Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dykstra, R. R. (1942) "National Defense," *Iowa State University Veterinarian*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol4/iss2/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa State University Veterinarian by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

National Defense

The role of the veterinarian in our present war effort

*R. R. Dykstra, D.V.M.**

VETERINARY Medicine is looming large in the picture of national defense and the emergencies created by it. This situation has been recognized by federal agencies in recommending military deferment to many practitioners, and to students in the veterinary colleges.

It is not difficult to visualize the situation in regard to animal health and food products derived from them should there

veterinarians. Their vigilance is never ending; and, as a result of it, conditions that threatened the livestock industry have been controlled at their very outset. Though Americans may not be aware of this—negative conditions seldom do impress us—those traveling in foreign countries at once sense the strong contrast in the general well-being of our animals. No greater fortune could come to our national enemies than to have one of our greatest sources of human food devastated by any of the numerous ailments to which animals are heir.

Achievements

Nor does the guardianship of the veterinarian terminate with the living animal. It is almost trite to call attention to the wholesomeness and the freedom from animal-to-man communicable ailments in human food products which are derived from animal sources. All this is brought about by the trained veterinary pathologist in his routine duties as a federal, state, county, or city health and foods inspector. No greater tribute can come to any professional group than to have it said that much human tuberculosis, as exemplified in the bone deforming diseases, scrofula and others, has been virtually stamped out as a sequel of the veterinarian's eradication of tuberculosis in the bovine. Can any one doubt the enormous value in human energy of Veterinarian Maurice C. Hall's contribution that carbon tetrachloride, a liquid previously used only in fire extinguishers and dry cleaning fluids, is practically 99 per cent effective in the elimina-



Dr. R. R. Dykstra

be a general curtailment of the services normally rendered by the veterinarian. It is universally recognized that the comparative freedom from extensive outbreaks of animal diseases is due to the

* Dean of the Division of Veterinary Medicine, Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas.

tion of human hookworms—let alone its value in veterinary medicine? It would be simple to cite many more comparable examples of the contributions of veterinary science.

Progress

No one has ever been able to adequately evaluate the services of the veterinary practitioner in his daily rounds of professional duty. Viewing the matter after intimate contact with those in the field over a period of more than thirty-five years, the writer is probably in as good a position as any to obtain a comprehensive view of the situation. He must confess his utter amazement at the evidence of progress during these years. A graduate of thirty-five years ago, with contact with the profession during that time, attending a gathering of veterinarians today would find himself entirely at sea in the maze of scientific principles and facts that form the basis of modern treatment as compared with the discussions in comparable meetings three and one-half decades ago. As a result of this advance, the veterinarian thinks more and more in terms of disease prevention rather than disease cure. The live-stock industry is the beneficiary of this advancement. Without it America would not be what it is today.

Basic Training

All of this progress points back to the basic professional training afforded by our veterinary colleges. The term basic is used advisedly because after graduation it soon dawns upon the professional novice that he advances only as he can draw upon the experiences of himself and others. In this latter connection, we must not overlook the constructive wholesome influence that has been and still is exerted by those veterinarians that are engaged in the commercial aspects of our profession. The highly ethical veterinary supply and manufacturing firms by means of the excellence of their products, the scientific training of their staffs, their progressive house organs, and their business-like manage-

ment have all contributed in a large measure to the veterinary effectiveness of today.

In no profession do we find a better exemplification of the true spirit of scientific research than that observed in the labors of the comparatively small group of workers that devote their time, perseveringly and painstakingly, to the investigation of animal disease. Undismayed, because all too frequently their efforts lead them against insurmountable difficulties, they calmly retrace their steps for a new start. Where would we be without them? Our hats are off to them!

The Student

And the young student, if he is the true type of those that it has been the writer's good fortune to guide and to teach, will not look too critically upon what, in the light of present knowledge, must frequently appear to him as crude methods possibly bordering on the empirical. He will remember that in a measure his professional forebears were compelled to work with inadequate devices and that they could learn to distinguish the true from the false only by the hard knocks received in the school of experience. Without that background, modern veterinary medicine would be impossible. Let the student resolve that he will carry the profession as far forward as his lowly predecessors, and leave it on a still higher plane of usefulness to mankind.

We'll Contribute

Veterinary medicine today covers such a tremendous field that in it there is room for all the qualified. Above all there is a promise of future usefulness unequalled in the field of modern scientific endeavor. America is now engaged in a task, the immensity of which staggers the imagination; she will not fail. But America needs the well trained; and, when the story of the great conflict is finally written in retrospect, the veterinary profession will rank high for its contributions to the maintenance of all that is held dear.